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LIBYA

AL-QADHDHAFI ON TIES WITH FRANCE, ARAB AFFAIRS

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[Eric Rouleau undated interview with President al-Qadhdhafi of Libya: "France Is Behaving Like a Gun-Seller, Mr al-Qadhdhafi tells us"]

[Text] Tripoli--"We have the sad impression that France is behaving like a gun-seller." Receiving us at armed forces command headquarters, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi began by spelling out his complaints. Dressed in sports clothes--black polo-neck sweater and jacket and red pants--he added calmly: "Is it not our duty as friends to speak frankly, to say that France disappoints us?"

The Libyan president recalled that his was the first country in the Arab world to buy French arms, going on to assert: "Other fraternal countries have since followed our example, and we congratulate ourselves on this. But sordid self-interest must not take precedence over principles. This was the criterion which guided General de Gaulle. The former French head of state imposed an embargo on arms sales to the Near East, without worrying about the loss he was inflicting on French industries. He made the right of the peoples take precedence over profit. The present Paris government sells aircraft to a certain country, which I will not name, and missiles to another which are used to down them. This profiteering is doing France considerable damage in the Arab world."

The Libyan president also considers that Mr Giscard d'Estaing's France is "less independent" of the United States than was General de Gaulle's. To illustrate his argument he cited congratulatory telegrams which the French head of state sent to Mr Kissinger and the signatories to the Sinai agreement last September. "Yet," he added, "Paris knew that this agreement had been imposed by the Americans and that it did not correspond to the wishes or aspirations of a good part of the Arab world. France thus assumed responsibility for interfering in an inter-Arab dispute."

By contrast, France's vote at the end of the recent Security Council debate overjoyed Colonel al-Qadhdhafi. "The draft resolution, as ambiguous as you like, did not satisfy us," he continued. "But I had to congratulate Mr Giscard d'Estaing on his vote in favor since by opposing the U.S. veto he demonstrated his independence of the United States and its European allies."

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's final complaint concerns bilateral relations. "In summing up our cooperation over the last 5 years," he stated, "we note that France has derived greater benefits than our country. I would like to see relations balanced, primarily in the political field. While visiting Paris Mr 'Abd as-Salam Jallud attempted to lay the foundations for our cooperation for the next 5 years. We have given ourselves this period of time to make a definitive judgement on France's conduct."

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi read attentively the interview which Mr Giscard d'Estaing gave to NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR on the West Sahara (LE MONDE dated 1-2 February); everything in the French head of state's arguments seemed "reasonable" to him, although he disagrees on one point: opposition to the creation of "mini-states." [paragraph continues]

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"We are in favor of large entities," he explained. "I even put our army at Morocco's disposal to liberate the Sahara from Spanish occupation, and I believed at that time (June 1975) that the territory would be incorporated into the Sharifian Kingdom. Not only did the Moroccan army refuse to participate in the liberation war waged by the POLISARIO--to whom I started supplying arms at the end of 1972--but it also unleashed atrocious repression against the Saharans following the Madrid agreement."

The Libyan president, who thus spelled out for the first time his attitude toward this conflict, went on: "The essential aspect of the problem at hand is not to determine whether an independent Saharan state is desirable or not. We are guided by two priority concerns--to put an end to the genocide that is taking place and to give a voice to the POLISARIO and the Saharans, who have not been consulted and who, I have learned somewhat belatedly, do not favor reattachment to Morocco."

[Question] Do you have any intention of offering mediation?

[Answer] No, because I believe that the confrontation has reached the point of no-return.

[Question] Do you believe that there is a risk of the conflict taking the form of an Algerian-Moroccan war?

[Answer] Yes, this eventuality cannot be ruled out.

[Question] Are you then going to side overtly with Algeria?

Colonel al-Qadhafi burst out laughing and replied:

"Don't put words into my mouth. We are on the side of right. As the holy Koran instructs us, we will support the victims and help the aggressors to get back on the right road. Don't forget that both are our brothers."

Paying tribute to Algeria's "new political line" favorable to Arab unity, the Libyan president noted that studies and negotiations are underway with a view to a merger between the two countries. But, in contrast to his previous attitude, he no longer makes any allusion to the timescale of such an operation. "We would consider ourselves happy if the present generation proved capable of preparing the reunification of the Arab world for the next generation."

"Our Relations With Egypt Are Normal"

Contrary to habit, Colonel al-Qadhafi refrained from launching into diatribes against other Arab countries. "The regimes no longer interest me. I only address myself to the Arab masses," he said drily. "Relations between Tripoli and Cairo are normal." "Egypt," he added maliciously, "is too occupied with its internal problems, inflation, and the famine raging there; it is also too absorbed with its dealings [demelees] with other Arab countries to be attacking Libya."

[Question] That didn't stop them accusing you of masterminding the Vienna incident involving the OPEC ministers....

[Answer] Our detractors made fools of themselves. How could we have organized an incident which cost the life of a high-ranking Libyan official? I repeat, we are against any form of terrorism, and if Israeli propaganda attempts to implicate us in such affairs it is solely to discredit the aid we give to the Palestinian resistance.
[answer ends]

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Throughout the interview our interlocutor refrained from using the name of the PLO. What would his attitude be if the central fedayeen body agreed to subscribe to a settlement advocating the creation of a Palestinian state in West-Bank Jordan and Gaza?

"The PLO does not have a monopoly on the resistance," he answered. "The struggle is being waged by diverse groups with differing means and objectives, and no single one of them represents the Palestinian people as a whole."

Suddenly bitter, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi exclaimed: "Why are you asking me such questions? We are from the Maghreb, aren't we? We have long been uninvolved in the Near East."

[Question] That is not the view of numerous Lebanese, who suspect you of having given generous aid to one of the parties involved in the conflict....

[Answer] This accusation is unjust. It is aimed at mobilizing opinion against Libya. It is stupid because we lack the means to ship arms to Lebanon.

[Question] It is a question of money, not arms...

[Answer] Those who accuse us are thereby attempting to distract attention from the flood of dollars that they are receiving from the United States and from the intrigues of the Americans and their local agents to liquidate the Palestinian resistance and patriotic forces in Lebanon.

[Question] How is it that your sympathies are with these "patriotic forces" when they include in their ranks Marxists and communists, to whom you have always been very hostile?

[Answer] My judgement is not based on ideological criteria in such cases. All those who support the Palestinian resistance, without distinction, are deserving of our friendship. The same is true in Oman, where we are on the side of the Dhofar insurgents--whether or not they are Marxists--who are resisting foreign aggression (from Iran). I defend first and foremost the Arab nation, which is fighting for its independence and dignity.

"The Compromise in Lebanon Has Solved Nothing"

[Question] Is it your view, as certain people believe, that Syria has imposed tutelage on Lebanon?

[Answer] It is malicious to even support such a thesis.

[Question] Do you believe that the cease-fire in Lebanon will last?

[Answer] No, because the compromise that has been reached has solved nothing. To restore definitive civil peace there would be a need for radical solutions and for the destruction of the tribal and confessional system, which lies at the root of Lebanon's troubles; an improved distribution of parliamentary seats between Christians and Moslems is nothing but a fraud. Religion should be excluded from state affairs.

[Question] You therefore advocate a secular state, whereas you never stop proclaiming that Islam must be the source of all legislation?

[Answer] In Lebanon, the political system could and should be based on the teachings of the monotheist religions, with each group maintaining its own personal status. That is not at variance with the abolition of confessionalism in state institutions.
[answer ends]

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Colonel al-Qadhafi attacked "frantics" on both sides and expressed the view that the absence of ulemas from Egypt and Saudi Arabia from the recent Moslem-Christian colloquium in Tripoli was due primarily to the "intolerance" of certain Moslem circles. In this connection he expressed the hope that the dialog that has begun will soon extend to "non-Zionist Jews." But here to he gave no hints.

"There is a big debit balance to be put right," he stated. "I know that it will take one or two generations to harmonize and coordinate the actions of all believers in the interests of the whole of mankind."

In the immediate future he is going to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican, to whom he will return a cathedral confiscated in Benghazi (used as the headquarters of the Arab Socialist Union), which was sacked during a recent disturbance in the city.

The Benghazi rising and the plot discovered last August are, according to the Libyan president, "natural phenomena" along the path of the building of a "democratic and socialist state."

The fervor with which he speaks in his "Green Book"--chapter one of which, devoted to democracy, has just been published--is equal to his conviction that he has discovered the path to the emancipation of the whole of mankind.

RADIO COMMENTS ON JALLUD'S VISIT TO FRANCE

Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 11 Feb 76 JN

[Unattributed commentary: "Prime Minister Jallud's visit to France is an affirmation of the Arab revolution's course vis-a-vis the world"]

[Excerpts] Arab relations with the states of the world depend on the extent of the support of these states for Arab national issues in particular and world liberation and humanitarian issues in general. The establishment of friendship and cooperation between the two sides cannot be in the interests of one part at the expense of the other. (?Proceeding from this premise, the 1 September revolution has proclaimed since its birth that Libya's political relations with the world depend mainly on the world's position regarding the primary Arab issue and other issues of the Arab nation. The establishment of bilateral relations must be based on the principle of equality between the two sides.

RCC member and Prime Minister Maj 'Abd as-Salam Ahmad Jallud's visit to France comes within the framework of Libya's revolutionary moves in support of the issues of the Arab nation, world liberation issues, and the interests of humanity within the Third World. Following a meeting (?yesterday) with French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, [name indistinct] said that the meeting had dealt with a discussion of Arab-French relations, the Sagua El Hamra and Rio de Oro issue, the Somali coast issue, the Mayotte Island issue, and the dialog between developing states and (?industrial) states to find an economic system which would reflect the new economic realities and enable the Third World states to play a role in the world economy.